

Low Waste Events and Gatherings



Lincoln log building activity at the Celebrate Mansfield Festival.

Low Waste - What Does It Mean?

- Plan activities that create little or no waste
- Use reusable items, such as dishes and linens
- Favor durable, long lasting; avoid trinkets
- Use bulk containers; avoid single serving packets and containers
- Avoid excessive quantities of food; plan for handling leftovers
- Use recyclable and compostable items

Before the Event

Volunteers

Work with organizers to identify areas where you can reduce or eliminate waste

Recruit volunteers to help with waste stations and clean up

Train volunteers on what to recycle and compost—training available through the Town

Advertising

Publicize your event as low waste

Use electronic media and electronic invitations, registration

Use flyers sparingly; place only in high traffic locations

Design signs that are timeless so that they can be reused at your next event

Decorations and Handouts

Avoid mass distribution of printed agendas and handouts

Print double-sided

Avoid lamination (since it cannot be recycled) unless you plan to use the publication for a long period of time

Use decorations that can be reused. Most plastic decorations CANNOT be recycled.

Replace balloons with bubbles, paper lanterns or streamers, cloth banners or flags, floating flowers. Birds, turtles and other animals commonly mistake released balloons for food. In place of water balloons use wet sponges.

Rethink giveaways; avoid disposable trinkets which quickly become trash

Catering

Determine all food and serving products you will need

Seek caterers that use local, seasonal and organic food

Forecast the head count to avoid wasted food by using RSVPs or registration

Arrange how to handle leftover food and include caterers in the conversation

Tell the caterer that you do not want any single-serve packets—they are not recyclable or compostable

Use washable, durable dinnerware, pitchers, cups, flatware and linens

Reusable dinnerware is the best option, but if impractical, then use compostable items

Discuss dinnerware options with the caterer or food vendor(s). Reusable dinnerware is the best option, but if impractical, then use compostable items. Check in with them a few weeks before the event.

Location and Custodial Service

If the event is not catered, do you have access to a dishwasher that will allow reusable dinnerware?

Check the waste containers at the venue to decide what you need for recycling and composting containers. Recycle and compost containers should always be placed next to waste containers.

What is the protocol for cleaning up after the event? All municipal buildings have exterior trash and recycle containers. The public schools and transfer station have compost systems. Determine who will be responsible for composting at the end of the event.

During the Event

Set up waste containers with recycling and composting container grouped together

Provide clear signage to post on or above containers. Taping actual objects to the signs or containers can be very helpful

Check-in with caterer or food vendors. Provide them with signage for the table or booth.

Staff the waste stations to ensure that recycle and compost is properly sorted

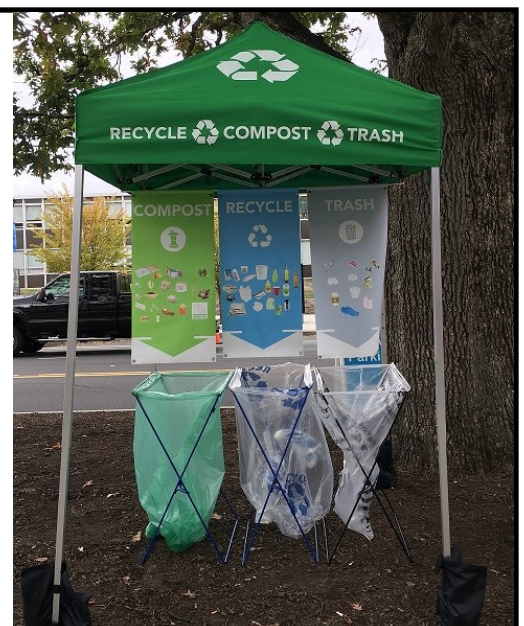
Make an announcement about event composting/recycling

Resources Available

- Foldable trash, compost and recycle containers and bags
- Recycle/compost/trash canopies
- Banners for waste stations
- Signage for food vendors
- Step by step guidance from the Recycling Coordinator
- A presentation to your organization

To borrow materials and receive training, contact the Mansfield Recycling Coordinator, 860-429-3333, waltonvd@mansfieldct.org.

Contact the Eastern Highland Health District , 860-429-3325, for guidance on how to incorporate safe food handling into a low waste event.



Elements to a Successful Low Waste Event



Food vendors are supplied with compostable Chinnet[®] plates and bowls and wooden forks and spoons for the Celebrate Mansfield Festival.



Participating low waste food vendors are recognized for their effort. The specific compostable items they use are identified.



Volunteers guide people on how to properly sort compost, recycle and trash at the Celebrate Mansfield Festival



Activity-based booths help eliminate the tendency toward handing out cheap disposable trinkets

Composting FAQs

What Can and Cannot Be Composted

What CAN be composted?

- a. ALL food waste (including grains, breads, meat, dairy, fruits, vegetables, tea bags, and coffee grinds)
- b. napkins & paper towels
- c. compostable plates, bowls, cups, and utensils. Examples, wooden utensils & Chinet ® paper products
- d. wooden coffee stirrers
- e. paper tea bags (staples are ok) and coffee grinds
- f. the green compostable bags that line the compost bins

What CANNOT be composted?

- a. ALL plastics, even if they are labelled as “compostable” or “biodegradable”*
- b. green compostable bags that line the compost bins*
- c. metal
- d. coffee lids
- e. sugar packets (these are lined with plastic coating)
- e. plastic ketchup or similar dressing and sauce packets (they are made from plastic)
- f. Styrofoam ® cups
- g. plastic bags
- h. foil or plastic bags that individually wrapped tea bags come in
- i. tea bags that are plastic

The Composting Process

Where does the compost go?

Depending on where the event is held, it could be mixed in one of the school’s compost bins or taken to the Mansfield transfer station leaf compost pile.

*Why don’t we allow compostable plastics?

Sadly, many “compostable” or “biodegradable” plastics do not compost well or they need the high heat of a commercial compost facility. The transfer station leaf compost pile, although large, is not managed as a commercial compost facility and therefore does not meet the high heat needs of compostable plastics. Currently there are no commercial facilities near Mansfield.

Your Recycle Cart— What's In, What's Out

MATERIAL TYPE	INCLUDES/EXAMPLES	DOES NOT INCLUDE
PAPER	Newspaper Office paper Junk mail Magazines Paper packing material	Paper plates Paper coffee cups Individual condiment packets Napkins Paper towels Shredded paper Envelopes padded with bubble
CARDBOARD	Corrugated cardboard Paperboard like a cereal box Paper towel tubes Pizza boxes Cardboard laundry detergent box	Styrofoam packing material Air pillows & bubble wrap Plastic liners Slices of pizza Frozen food containers
METAL FOOD & BEVERAGE CONTAINERS	Pet food cans Soup cans Aluminum foil & trays Soda cans Metal lids	Metal lined cardboard, like a Pringles® container Metal foil top on yogurt container
PLASTIC CONTAINERS	Plastic laundry detergent bottles Milk jugs Shampoo bottles Yogurt containers Plastic solo cups Beverage bottles Plastic lids <u>on</u> the container Take-out containers other than Styrofoam Plastic berry boxes Condiment bottles	Styrofoam products Plastic cutlery Plastic food pouches Toothpaste tubes Toothbrushes Plastic bags Plastic lids <u>off</u> the container Individual condiment packets Prescription bottles Plastic straws Plastic air pillows Plastic wrappers of any kind
GLASS FOOD & BEVERAGE CONTAINERS	Wine & beer bottles Salsa jars Sauce jars	Corks Ceramic mugs & dishes Drinking glasses Perfume bottles
CARTONS & DRINK BOXES	Milk cartons Orange juice cartons Broth cartons Almond milk cartons	Juice pouches Vegetable pouches Tuna fish pouches Plastic straws